

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 4-8 and 10 have been amended and claims 11-20 have been added as follows:

**Listing of Claims:**

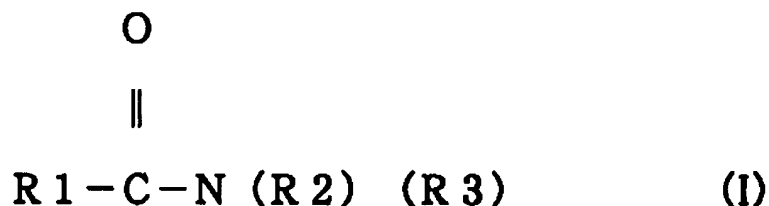
Claim 1 (original): A thermosetting powder coating composition comprising a coating forming component which can crosslink and harden by an ester exchange reaction between a carboxylic ester group and a hydroxyl group, and an ester exchange reaction catalyst, wherein said ester exchange reaction catalyst is constituted from an organic sulfonate (X) derived from a carboxylic amide and an organic sulfonic acid having fluorine atoms.

Claim 2 (original): The thermosetting powder coating composition as set forth in claim 1, wherein said coating forming component contains a polymer which contains two or more hydroxyl groups and/or two or more carboxylic ester groups in one molecule.

Claim 3 (original): The thermosetting powder coating composition as set forth in claim 1, wherein said coating forming component is a vinyl type polymer.

Claim 4 (currently amended): The thermosetting powder coating composition as set forth in ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, wherein said carboxylic amide compound is expressed by a general formula (I)

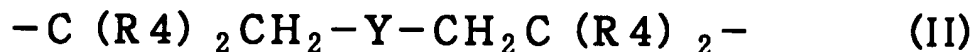
[Chemical 8]



wherein R1, R2 and R3 independently represents a hydrogen atom or monovalent organic group.

R2 and R3 may be bonded to each other to form a divalent group expressed by a general formula (II):

[Chemical 9]



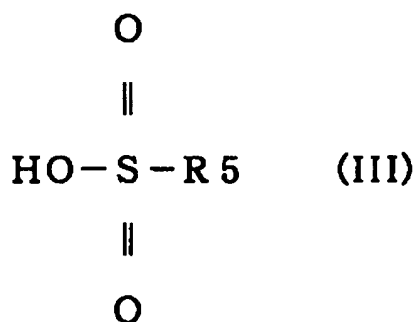
wherein R4 represents a hydrogen atom or methyl group, Y represents any of a direct bond, methylene group, substituted methylene group, and oxygen atom, and R1 and R2 may be bonded to each other to form a substituted or a non-substituted alkylene group having 2 to 11 carbon atoms in total.

Claim 5 (currently amended): The thermosetting powder coating composition as set forth in ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, wherein said carboxylic amide compound contains two or more N-alkanoyl-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl piperidine-4-yl groups in one molecule.

Claim 6 (currently amended): The thermosetting powder coating composition as set forth in ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, wherein said carboxylic amide compound is N-methyl-2-pyrrolidone.

Claim 7 (currently amended): The thermosetting powder coating composition as set forth in ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, wherein said organic sulfonic acid having fluorine atoms is expressed by a general formula (III):

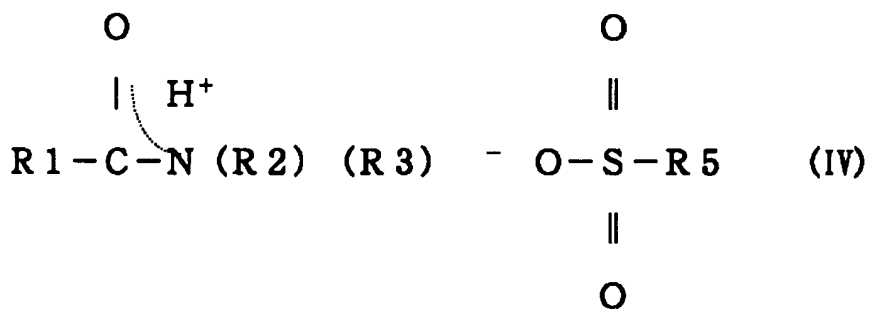
[Chemical 10]



wherein R5 represents a monovalent organic group having fluorine atoms.

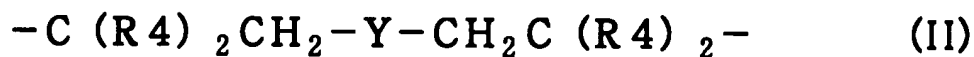
Claim 8 (currently amended): The thermosetting powder coating composition as set forth in ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, wherein said organic sulfonate (X) has a structure expressed by a general formula (IV):

[Chemical 11]



wherein each of R1, R2 and R3 independently represents a hydrogen atom or a monovalent organic group, and R2 and R3 may be bonded to each other to form a divalent group expressed by a general formula (II):

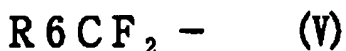
[Chemical 12]



wherein R4 represents a hydrogen atom or methyl group, Y represents any of a direct bond, a methylene group, a substituted methylene group, and an oxygen atom, and R1 and R2 may be bonded to each other to form a substituted or a non-substituted alkylene group having carbon atoms of 2 to 11 in total, and R5 represents a monovalent organic group having fluorine atoms.

Claim 9 (original): The thermosetting powder coating composition as set forth in claim 7, wherein said R5 in the general formula (III) is a monovalent organic group expressed by a general formula (V):

[Chemical 13]

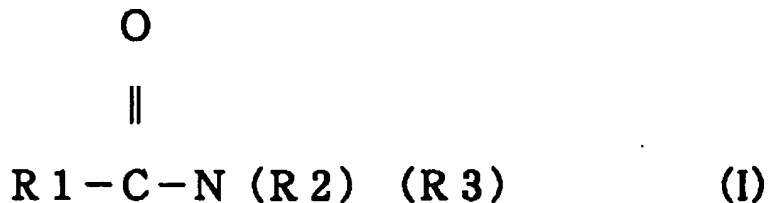


wherein R6 represents a hydrogen atom, a fluorine atom, or a substituted or non-substituted hydrocarbon group having 1 to 5 carbon atoms.

Claim 10 (currently amended): A hardened material obtained by applying the thermosetting powder coating composition as set forth in ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1 to a base material, and crosslinking and hardening the applied thermosetting powder coating composition.

Claim 11 (new): The thermosetting powder coating composition as set forth in claim 2, wherein said carboxylic amide compound is expressed by a general formula (I)

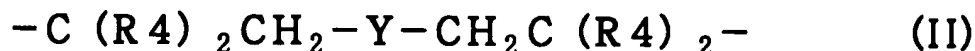
[Chemical 8]



wherein R1, R2 and R3 independently represents a hydrogen atom or monovalent organic group.

R2 and R3 may be bonded to each other to form a divalent group expressed by a general formula (II):

[Chemical 9]



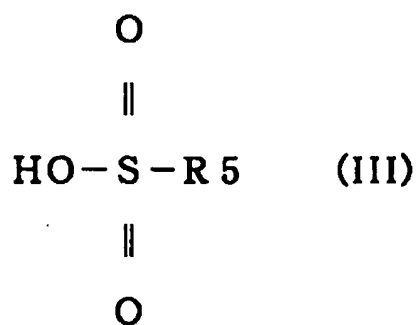
wherein R4 represents a hydrogen atom or methyl group, Y represents any of a direct bond, methylene group, substituted methylene group, and oxygen atom, and R1 and R2 may be bonded to each other to form a substituted or a non-substituted alkylene group having 2 to 11 carbon atoms in total.

Claim 12 (new): The thermosetting powder coating composition as set forth in claim 2, wherein said carboxylic amide compound contains two or more N-alkanoyl-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl piperidine-4-yl groups in one molecule.

Claim 13 (new): The thermosetting powder coating composition as set forth in claim 2, wherein said carboxylic amide compound is N-methyl-2-pyrrolidone.

Claim 14 (new): The thermosetting powder coating composition as set forth in claim 2, wherein said organic sulfonic acid having fluorine atoms is expressed by a general formula (III):

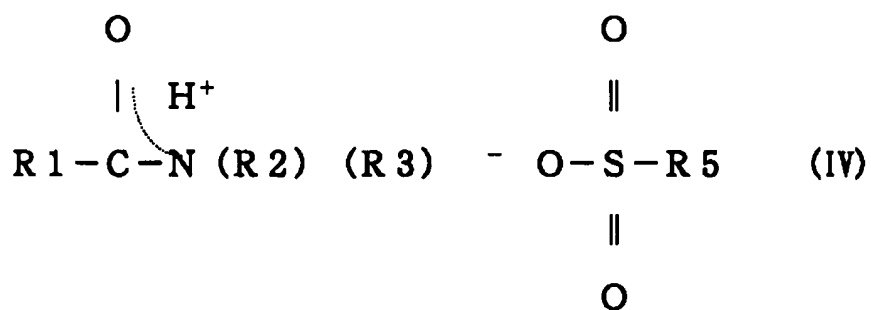
[Chemical 10]



wherein R5 represents a monovalent organic group having fluorine atoms.

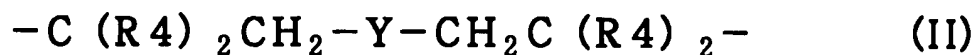
Claim 15 (new): The thermosetting powder coating composition as set forth in claim 2, wherein said organic sulfonate (X) has a structure expressed by a general formula (IV):

[Chemical 11]



wherein each of R1, R2 and R3 independently represents a hydrogen atom or a monovalent organic group, and R2 and R3 may be bonded to each other to form a divalent group expressed by a general formula (II):

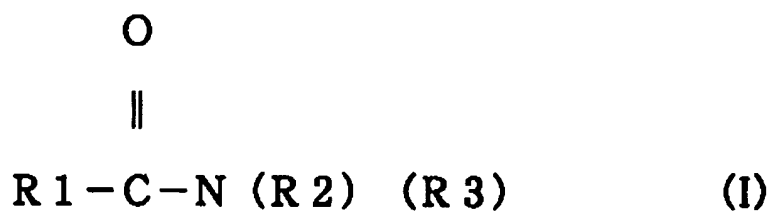
[Chemical 12]



wherein R4 represents a hydrogen atom or methyl group, Y represents any of a direct bond, a methylene group, a substituted methylene group, and an oxygen atom, and R1 and R2 may be bonded to each other to form a substituted or a non-substituted alkylene group having carbon atoms of 2 to 11 in total, and R5 represents a monovalent organic group having fluorine atoms.

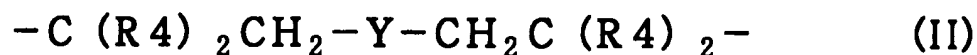
Claim 16 (new): The thermosetting powder coating composition as set forth in claim 3, wherein said carboxylic amide compound is expressed by a general formula (I)

[Chemical 8]



wherein R1, R2 and R3 independently represents a hydrogen atom or monovalent organic group. R2 and R3 may be bonded to each other to form a divalent group expressed by a general formula (II):

[Chemical 9]

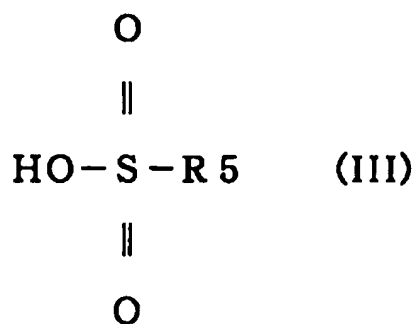


wherein R<sup>4</sup> represents a hydrogen atom or methyl group, Y represents any of a direct bond, methylene group, substituted methylene group, and oxygen atom, and R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> may be bonded to each other to form a substituted or a non-substituted alkylene group having 2 to 11 carbon atoms in total.

Claim 17 (new): The thermosetting powder coating composition as set forth in claim 3, wherein said carboxylic amide compound contains two or more N-alkanoyl-2,2,6,6-tetramethyl piperidine-4-yl groups in one molecule.

Claim 18 (new): The thermosetting powder coating composition as set forth in claim 3, wherein said carboxylic amide compound is N-methyl-2-pyrrolidone.

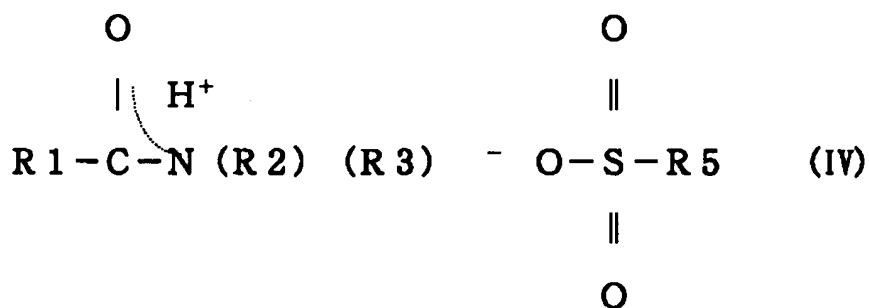
Claim 19 (new): The thermosetting powder coating composition as set forth in claim 3, wherein said organic sulfonic acid having fluorine atoms is expressed by a general formula (III):  
[Chemical 10]



wherein R5 represents a monovalent organic group having fluorine atoms.

Claim 20 (new): The thermosetting powder coating composition as set forth in claim 3, wherein said organic sulfonate (X) has a structure expressed by a general formula (IV):

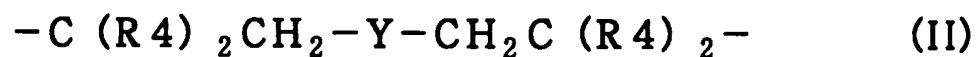
[Chemical 11]



wherein each of R1, R2 and R3 independently represents a hydrogen atom or a monovalent organic group, and R2 and R3 may be bonded to each other to form a divalent group expressed by a general

formula (II):

[Chemical 12]



wherein R<sup>4</sup> represents a hydrogen atom or methyl group, Y represents any of a direct bond, a methylene group, a substituted methylene group, and an oxygen atom, and R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> may be bonded to each other to form a substituted or a non-substituted alkylene group having carbon atoms of 2 to 11 in total, and R<sup>5</sup> represents a monovalent organic group having fluorine atoms.